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22. The chamber of claim *20*¹⁶, wherein said conveyors are configured to hold workpieces in the form of one of compact disk workpieces and of magneto-optical storage disk workpieces.

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23. The chamber of claim *20*¹⁶, wherein said conveyors comprise a support plate with an upstanding pin; spring loaded holding portions around said pin being biased radially outwardly with respect to said pin, and further comprising holding portions projecting outwardly with respect to said pin and being biased slightly outside the surface of said pin.--

REMARKS

Applicant affirms the election of Claims 1-18 denominated by the Examiner as Group 1, but does not agree that restriction was necessary or appropriate. In particular, the Office Action does not make a prima facie case of independence and distinctness in merely alleging that the subject matter of the Group I claims does not require a holding arrangement and the subject matter of the Group II claims does not require a transport arm. No showing has been made of materiality within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 121 for purposes of justifying restriction.

The indication of the allowability of Claims 9 and 16-17 has been noted. As will be seen, the subject matter of allowable Claim 9 has been incorporated in amended Claim 1 above and is also included in independent Claim 20 directed to the vacuum chamber. Accordingly, allowance of all the claims remaining in this application is earnestly solicited.

The rejection of Claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is traversed, and reconsideration is requested, particularly in light of the above amendments to the claims in

which an effort has been made to provide antecedent basis wherever appropriate.

Applicant cannot agree, however, that the terminologies "or" or "at least" are per se vague and indefinite. Indeed, the term "at least" is used quite frequently in patent claiming to define minimum amounts or minimum numbers of elements. Applicant submits that this language would clearly be understood by one of ordinary skill in this art. Moreover, even the Manual of Patenting Examining Procedure recognizes that the use of alternative expressions such as "or" do not necessarily render a claim indefinite where the parts referred to are essentially equivalents. With regard to the warping of the normals with respect to the rotational axis it is believed that Fig. 2 shows this warping with respect to the rotation axis A in a manner sufficient to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to understand that "warping" means that there is an angular relationship between the normals and the rotational axis. With regard to the subject matter of Claim 7, reference need only be made to Fig. 6 which shows openings 25 arranged such that during rotation of the transport device, the transport device sweeps over a conical surface having a cone angle in which the openings 25 of the stations 27 are located on a great circle of a generated cone-shaped trajectory surface which is swept over as the transport arms 5a, 5b and 5c rotate around the rotational axis A.

All that is required to satisfy 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is claim language of sufficient specificity to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to understand the metes and

bounds of the invention. Applicant believes that he has satisfied that standard at the very least.

The rejection of Claims 1-4, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 18 as being anticipated by the Japan reference under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the rejection of Claims 5-7 as being unpatentable over the Japan reference under 35 U.S.C. § 103, and the rejection of Claims 10, 11 and 13 as being unpatentable over the Japan reference in view of the Soviet reference under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are deemed moot in light of the above amendments to the claims. Therefore, even though applicant traverses those rejections, he does not deem detailed argumentation with respect thereto to be necessary at this time since it would unduly encumber the record.

Likewise, the other patent document cited as being of interest has been noted, but is not commented upon in detail inasmuch as it is deemed no more pertinent than the Japan document and the Soviet document.

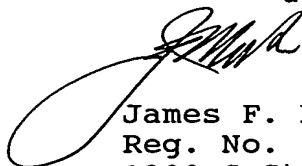
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and favorable action upon all of the claims remaining in this application are earnestly solicited.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any such fee or

any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayment of fees to
Deposit Account No. 05-1323.

Respectfully submitted,

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